

Present: Laila Barr; Dan Chavre; Kathy Dunn, vice-chair; Dave Elliott, chair; Chris Fankhauser, (provisional); Kumiko Huff; Jane Kuechle; Ed Miller; Carla Saulter

Excused: Carl Johnson (provisional), Miranda Leidich, Mike O'Neal (provisional), Roger Thordarson

Staff: Barbara de Michele, Community Relations liaison

Guests: Carol Finn, provisional member pending Councilmember interview

Elliott called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.,

Merger Discussion

TAC members reviewed documents (suggested ordinance language and an executive summary) related to a proposed merger of the Transit Advisory Committee with the Accessible Services Advisory Committee. Shereen suggested that de Michele add more detail to the executive summary regarding proposed resolutions to committee concerns about the merger. The group discussed whether they wanted to recommend a new name as a "commission" or "committee." By consensus, the group agreed it wanted to be called a "commission." (See attached document).

Jane Kuechle moved/Ed Miller seconded that TAC approve the proposed merger and accept the recommended language for the new ordinance. The members approved the motion with 8 supporting, 1 opposed and 1 abstention. Provisional members were not allowed to vote on this motion.

Round-Robin Discussion

Due to the brief agenda, members were asked to discuss any transit-related issues they wanted to bring to the committee's attention. Much of the discussion centered around the new ORCA card and problems with applying for the regional reduced fare. Dunn suggested that downtown Seattle needs a plan for re-routing traffic so that transit can more efficiently use the streets. It would give riders a greater incentive to take transit. Barr said she would like to see a moving sidewalk installed at the airport between the light rail station and the terminal. Fankhauser extolled the transit system in Vancouver, BC. He also said that his small company, with nine employees, is having difficulty getting re-enrolled into the ORCA system.

Committee Business

- Shereen asked about the letter supporting bus shelter advertising for jurisdictions. The group had delayed addressing the letter until after the November elections. De Michele said she would put the item onto the February agenda.
- Members filled out financial disclosure forms for submittal to the Ethics Office.

Note: Provisional membership is provided to Transit Advisory Committee nominees whose applications have been approved by Metro staff, approved by their respective Councilmembers, and submitted to the Executive. Provisional members are allowed to deliberate with other TAC members, but may not participate in votes or be elected to committee leadership posts.

- With de Michele recused, members discussed a celebration of her impending retirement.

Elliott adjourned the meeting at 8:00 p.m.

**Proposed Merger of TAC and ASAC
Executive Summary
January 12, 2010**

Introduction

Faced with a budget shortfall in 2009, Metro staff was asked to look for operational efficiencies within each section. As a result, the Communications section began to explore a possible merger of the Transit Advisory Committee and the Accessible Services Advisory Committee. Both committees provide Metro management, the King County Executive, the King County Council and others with community and bus rider perspectives on transit policy issues. Both are assigned staff liaison support from the Communications section.

In August, each committee appointed representatives to serve on a subcommittee to explore a possible merger. The group met three times – in September, November and December, 2009. Representatives explored the rationale for the merger, identified issues that might prevent a merger, and developed consensus on a proposal for a new combined group that would replace the two committees.

Overall, the consensus emerging from these discussions was supportive of merging the Transit Advisory Committee and the Accessible Services Advisory Committee.

Rationale

A primary benefit of merging the two committees is to create a stronger voice for a wide range of bus riders. TAC and ASAC representatives all agree that they have addressed many overlapping and shared issues during recent deliberations and advisory actions. The budget shortfall, the need for additional revenue, and the need for improvements in accessibility affect all riders. Through the merger, committee members will gain a larger understanding of the way that transit impacts the lives of a broad range of community members. A larger, integrated committee will have more force in presenting its conclusions to decision-makers.

By combining the two groups, Metro will realize some cost savings through a reduction in staff time, duplication of efforts, and costs attendant to organizing and supporting advisory committees. However, the group did not feel that cost savings were the driving force behind the proposed merger.

Concerns

The one overwhelming concern, expressed by members of both groups, is that the special focus and voice of the Accessible Services Advisory Committee would be diluted or lost over time. Some sub-committee members saw an opportunity to educate the combined group. Others worried about the erosion of attention to issues specifically effecting disabled, elderly and ACCESS riders. These concerns have been addressed in specific recommendations for ordinance language creating a new, combined committee which include 1) specifically selecting an equal number of members representing disabled and elderly riders and members who utilize fixed-route services and; 2) a requirement that annual committee work plans always address at least one issue related to accessibility.

Appreciation

Metro staff appreciates the advice and commitment of additional volunteer time from Laila Barr, Tina Shereen, Kathy Dunn and Ed Miller of the Transit Advisory Committee and Kay Burrows, Jerome Pipitone and Betty Suttle of the Accessible Services Advisory Committee